

**Testimony of Dr. Jonathan Gueverra
Chief Executive Officer, The Community College of the District of Columbia**

District of Columbia, State Board of Education Meeting On Workforce Readiness

April 27, 2011

Good Evening, State Board President Trabue and members of the State Board of Education, I am Julie Johnson and I serve as the Deputy to the Chief Executive Officer of the Community College of the District of Columbia. Tonight, I present this testimony about workforce readiness on behalf of Dr. Gueverra our CEO.

The Community College of the District of Columbia (CCDC) has been operational for just under two years now. During this period, the leadership has been working diligently to follow and to develop best practices to deliver the best and most effective post high school educational and workforce programs for the District. While this statement implies that we are working with high school completers, there are many variables and exceptions. First, many high school completers may not be reading at an appropriate level to allow them to participate sufficiently in the available post-secondary programs offered at the CCDC. Second, there are residents who are motivated to receive workforce training and education, but they did not complete high school and are also not reading at an appropriate level that allows them to be successful in their desired program. As a result, the CCDC also offers literacy education as well as GED preparation for residents who need them.

Additionally, the CCDC recognizes its role as the entity from a state perspective that should be responsible for receipt and use of Perkins Funds for career and technical education and as an entity that equalizes the playing field for all residents who seek post-secondary education. Therefore, our efforts include partnerships and collaborations with many. Included among them are: DC Government agencies, the District of Columbia Public Schools, the District's Public Charter Schools. We provide dual enrollment courses and career technical programs that articulate from DCPS to the CCDC as well as college and career readiness programs. The CCDC also partners with a variety of local training providers and after school providers to leverage all available resources to assure that residents are receiving the highest quality training at the lowest possible cost.

Our education model is based on what I call a concept of “one door.” Each individual enters the CCDC with a different set of goal and our objective is to help her/him to achieve their goals. For us a student who enters through our workforce door is given the same opportunity to achieve their highest potential including obtaining an associate degree, if they desire. They are provided with information related to the multiple pathways and the educational ladders and services that are available to them. I have proposed that the CCDC assume a greater strategic role in training adults and displaced workers in the District. To that end, we have convened training providers as well as employers to begin the discussion about the creation of some form of training consortium that would assist in reducing barriers that residents face when they seek training opportunities.

Most recently, we have agreed to begin a pilot program that uses the available evening and night space at the career technical high schools for the purpose of training young and out-of-work adults who desire such services. Through a collaboration between the CCDC, the Department of Employment Services and the Office for the State Superintendent for Education, the CCDC plans to offer programs at Phelps Architecture, Construction and Engineering High School; the Academy for Construction and Design at Cardozo Senior High School; Ballou Senior High School and the Hospitality Public Charter High School at Roosevelt High School, as well as at CCDC. The target programs are in the areas of automotive, aviation, culinary and hospitality, construction and broadband. As the leader in this pilot effort, the CCDC will provide trainees with assessment, occupational training, literacy and numeracy training, and programs to hone their online skills, job readiness, job placement, internships, and job coaching. The CCDC will also partner with a community organization to provide experienced work readiness and job placement support. Our goal is an 80% placement rate and/or continuance in an academic program upon program completion. To assist those who may have financial difficulty, the CCDC will provide funding to allow approximately half of the 140 participants to enroll at the community college without having to incur the cost of the application fee. The lessons learned from this pilot will inform how we continue our strategic efforts to provide a robust and effective workforce system for the District of Columbia.

Thank you and I look forward to working with you on this very exciting next step.